

about to go to the new Governor's inauguration out there. You ought to take the opportunity to put in a plug for what we're doing there. I'm sure you will. *[Laughter]*

Ladies and gentlemen, let me say, again, how grateful I am for all the people who worked on this proposal, for the advocates for the elderly and the disabled who are here, for the very large representation from Congress. And thank you, again, for the passion and the commitment that you manifested in your statement and for having the courage to come here and tell us about your situation. I hope it will help to change the future of America.

God bless you, and happy New Year. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. in the Grand Foyer on the State Floor at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to caregiver Patricia Darlak, who introduced the President, and her husband, Dennis.

Statement on the Launch of the New European Currency

January 4, 1999

We welcome the launch of the euro, an historic step that 11 nations in Europe have taken toward a more complete Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The United States has long been an advocate for European integration, and we admire the steady progress that Europe has demonstrated in taking the often difficult budget decisions that make this union possible. A strong and stable Europe, with open markets and robust growth, is good for America and for the world. A successful economic union that contributes to a dynamic Europe is clearly in our long-term interests.

Remarks on the Zero Tolerance for Drugs in Prison Initiative

January 5, 1999

Thank you very much. Let me begin by just expressing my appreciation to all who have spoken and to all who are here for the years and years and years of commitment you have manifested in this endeavor. I thank my

good friend Senator Leahy, and Congressman Rangel. I thank General Reno and General McCaffrey for making it possible for us to continue to emphasize these things and to actually make progress, for being both practical and idealistic.

Thank you, Mayor Griffin, for what you said and for what you're doing, and for bringing your police chief, Chief Hoover, here with you.

I want to say, obviously, a special word of appreciation to Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, who has literally redefined what it means to be a Lieutenant Governor—*[laughter]*—I would hate to succeed her as Lieutenant Governor of Maryland—*[laughter]*—for her indefatigable energy. I thank the others here from Maryland who are involved in her endeavor.

I'd also like to say a special word of welcome to Judge Joel Tauber and all the others who are here from the drug courts throughout America. I'll have more to say about them in a moment, but I am especially grateful for their endeavors.

Six years ago, as has already been said, our country was at peace, but too many of our communities were at war. Illegal drugs were ravaging cities on both coasts and the American heartland in between. Crack and methamphetamine use were at near record levels. Drug dealers controlled whole neighborhoods and thought nothing of opening fire on passing police cars. Many communities lived in terror; many children feared walking down the street.

I actually met, in a school in California—I'll never forget this—with a group of children who were drilled on how to jump out of their desk and hit the floor if they were subject to drive-by shootings. It had a searing impact on me. One of the reasons I ran for President was to give those kids their futures back. And all of you have done a lot to give them their futures back, and I'm very grateful to you.

In every successive year, I have proposed a larger antidrug budget. In 1999—we had a 30-percent increase just between then and 1996, even as we produced the first balanced budget in a generation. Under General McCaffrey's leadership, we have put these resources to good use: unprecedented new

tools for domestic enforcement; unprecedented new campaigns to convince young people to stay off drugs—I hope you saw one of our ads on the football game last night, if you watched it—unprecedented new efforts to stem the flow of drugs across our borders; unprecedented new efforts to stop the revolving door between the prison and the street.

As you've heard from Attorney General Reno and General McCaffrey, this strategy is working. We do have the lowest crime rate in 25 years. Drug use is falling. Finally—thank goodness—drug use is beginning to fall among our young people.

But the crime rate is still too high. The streets are still too violent. There is still too much drug use, especially in our prisons. The Mayor of Reno whispered to me when Kathleen was talking that Mayor Daley told him it was easier to get drugs in the Illinois penitentiary than it was on the streets of Chicago. I say this not to criticize the Illinois penitentiary; that's a statement that could be made in more than half the States in this country. So we still have a lot to do. There is no better way to start than to help our prisoners break clean from drugs.

Today we release a new study from the Department of Justice that offers more convincing evidence that drug use stokes all kinds of crime, from property crimes like burglary, auto theft, to violent crimes like assault and murder. It shows that one in six offenders landed in prison for a crime committed just to get money for drugs, that nearly a third of prisoners were using drugs at the time they committed their crimes, that more than 80 percent of prisoners have a history of drug use. And when you consider that—plus the breathtaking statistic that Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend gave us about the volume of heroin and cocaine used by people who are in the criminal justice system—it is clear to us that if we are going to continue to reduce the rate of crime, we have to do something to avoid releasing criminals with their dangerous drug habits intact.

As you've heard from previous speakers, we've already done a lot to expand drug testing and treatment in Federal prisons and to encourage States to do the same. But today

we want to make a dramatic leap forward. The balanced budget I will submit to Congress will contain a \$215 million zero-tolerance drug program designed to promote drug supervision, our Nation's most comprehensive effort ever to test and treat not only criminals in prison but also those on probation and parole.

To inmates in every State, we want to send a message: If you stay on drugs, you must stay behind bars. To probationers and parolees, we want to send a message: If you want to keep your freedom, you have to keep free of drugs.

Through this initiative, we will also expand our efforts to help communities build and administer drug courts—Charlie Rangel mentioned Attorney General Reno's efforts as a young prosecutor. Many years ago, long before I ever thought I would be standing here as President, because my brother-in-law was a public defender in the Miami drug court that the Attorney General set up, I used to go and visit it in the eighties. I went three times; one time I stayed for the whole session of court, almost all day. I have never had a more exhilarating experience in a courtroom in my life, including the sessions of the United States Supreme Court I have attended, because finally I saw something that I thought could actually work to change people's lives, to restore people to productive use in society, to reduce the crime rate, to make people safer, and to stop the policy of warehousing people in ever-increasing numbers in order to keep our streets safe.

When I took office, there were just a handful of these drug courts in operation, including the one that the Attorney General launched in Miami. Today, there are more than 400. If our budget proposal is approved by Congress, we can move to have more than 1,000 up and running by the end of next year. That is a worthy goal. It will change America for the better. It will give a lot of people their lives back and make our streets safer.

I'm also proud to say that on top of these proposals we will free up another \$120 million for drug-free prison initiatives this year, funds to help States boost testing and treatment, funds to purge their prisons of drugs with advanced new technologies.

At the end of this century, we've made great progress in our efforts to free our children and our communities from drugs and crime. As we begin a new century and a new millennium, we have an enormous opportunity to finish the job, to harness all the resources of the criminal justice system—our courts, our prosecutors, our prisons, our probation officers, our police—to break the drug habits of prisoners and people on parole and probation. We have to break this cycle. We have to give all these people a chance to be drug-free and to be productive citizens again. It is the only way we can ever, in the end, assure our children the future they deserve.

Thank you all for what you do. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:04 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Jeff Griffin and Chief of Police Jerry Hoover of Reno, NV; Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of Maryland; Judge Jeffrey S. Tauber, president, National Association of Drug Court Professionals; and Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, IL.

Statement on United States Policy Toward Cuba

January 5, 1999

Last March, in the wake of Pope John Paul's historic visit to Cuba, I authorized measures designed to ease the plight of the Cuban people and help them prepare for a democratic future. The restoration of direct passenger flights, resumption of family remittances, expansion of people-to-people contacts, and increases in the sale of medicines since then have had a positive impact. They demonstrate the United States' compassion for the Cuban people, our strong interest in building bonds between the citizens of our nations, and our determination to provide the people of Cuba with hope in their struggle against a system that for four decades has denied them even basic human rights.

Building on the success of the measures I announced last March, I am today authorizing additional steps to reach out to the Cuban people:

- Expansion of remittances by allowing any U.S. resident (not only those with

families in Cuba) to send limited funds to individual Cuban families as well as to organizations independent of the government.

- Expansion of people-to-people contact through two-way exchanges among academics, athletes, scientists, and others, including streamlining the approval process for such visits.

- Authorization of the sale of food and agricultural inputs to independent non-governmental entities, including religious groups and Cuba's emerging private sector, such as family restaurants and private farmers.

- Authorization of charter passenger flights to cities in Cuba other than Havana and from some cities in the United States other than Miami in order to facilitate family reunification for persons living outside those cities.

- An effort to establish direct mail service to Cuba, as provided for in the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992.

At the same time, we are taking steps to increase the flow of information to the Cuban people and others around the world, by strengthening Radio and TV Marti and launching new public diplomacy programs in Latin America and Europe to keep international attention focused on the need for change in Cuba. The United States will continue to urge the international community to do more to promote respect for human rights and democratic transition in Cuba.

I am also pleased to announce that I intend to nominate Mr. Jose "Pepe" Collado and Ms. Avis Lavelle as members of the Advisory Board for Cuba Broadcasting. I further intend to designate Mr. Collado as Chairman upon confirmation by the Senate. This important advisory body has been without a Chairman since the death of Jorge Mas Canosa more than a year ago. We are processing other nominations and, in cooperation with congressional leaders, will continue to name members of this bipartisan board.

These steps are designed to help the Cuban people without strengthening the Cuban Government. They are consistent with our policy of keeping pressure on the regime for democratic change—through the